

The Sheepfold of John 10

	Jesus' Three Metaphors ¹	My Further Comments and Examples
v. 1a	<p>In vs. 1-5 Jesus presents the first metaphor.</p> <hr/> <p>Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὁ μὴ εἰσερχόμενος διὰ τῆς θύρας εἰς τὴν αὐλήν τῶν προβάτων ἀλλ' ἀναβαίνων ἀλλαχόθεν</p> <p>“Truly, truly I say to you, the one who does not enter through the gate into the sheepfold but climbs up some other way,…”</p> <p>There can be a person who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate but climbs up another way.</p>	<p>There is a wrong way to become a leader of the Jews.</p> <p>For example, there are the unbelieving Pharisees with their erroneous Judaism that is supposedly based upon the Mosaic Covenant but misunderstands it and the rest of the biblical message in the Old Testament. Indeed, Jesus is speaking to a group of them who are rejecting him as the Messiah.</p>
v. 1b	<p>ἐκεῖνος κλέπτης ἐστὶν καὶ ληστής</p> <p>“...that person is a thief and a robber.”</p> <p>The person who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate but climbs up another way is a thief and a robber.</p>	<p>The wrong way to lead the Jews basically makes the leader a criminal.</p> <p>For example, the unbelieving Pharisees selfishly demand the loyalty, attention, and affirmation of their fellow Jews instead of encouraging them to be loyal to God alone.</p>
v. 2	<p>ὁ δὲ εἰσερχόμενος διὰ τῆς θύρας ποιμὴν ἐστὶν τῶν προβάτων</p> <p>“But he who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.”</p> <p>The person who enters the sheepfold through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.</p>	<p>There is the right way to become the leader of the Jews, and the person who uses this path is definitely their one, true leader.</p> <p>Obviously, for example, Jesus is the unique leader of the Jews who satisfies all the proper requirements and whom all the Jews should embrace as their Messiah. This is the main point in his presentation of these metaphors to the Pharisees and other Jews.</p>
v. 3	<p>τούτῳ ὁ θυρωρὸς ἀνοίγει καὶ τὰ πρόβατα τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούει καὶ τὰ ἴδια πρόβατα φωνεῖ κατ' ὄνομα καὶ ἐξάγει αὐτά</p> <p>“The gatekeeper opens for this man, and the sheep listen to his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and he leads them out.”</p> <p>The gatekeeper opens the gate for the shepherd of the sheep, who listen to his voice. He also calls his own sheep by name, and he leads them out of the sheepfold.</p>	<p>It becomes clear that this person is the correct leader of the Jews because, when he comes to them, they recognize him as their leader and he interacts with them in a loving manner, including making sure they have all they need to avoid following “thieves and robbers.”</p> <p>Again, obviously and for example, Jesus is the only appropriate Messiah and leader of the Jews, whom those with authentic belief recognize as such, so that he will always be their leader who provides everything they need for obtaining God's promises.</p>

¹ The red lines in the table separate Jesus metaphor of the sheepfold in vs. 1-5, John's editorial comment in v. 6, Jesus' other metaphor in vs. 7-15, and Jesus' additional information in vs. 16-18. Also, in this column, the translation in Arial font is below the Greek text followed by my brief explanation in the Times New Roman font of what Jesus is saying.

<p>v. 4</p>	<p>ὅταν τὰ ἴδια πάντα ἐκβάλῃ, ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν πορεύεται καὶ τὰ πρόβατα αὐτῶ ἀκολουθεῖ, ὅτι οἶδασιν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ</p> <p>“When he takes out all his own, he goes ahead of them. And the sheep follow him, because they know his voice.”</p> <p>When the shepherd leads his sheep out of the sheepfold, he goes ahead of them, and they follow him, because they recognize his voice.</p>	<p>There is an intimate connection between Jewish believers and their one, correct leader that is clear from their willingly following his instructions to avoid following false leaders, because they recognize his teaching as the truth.</p> <p>For example, as Jesus leads believing Jews, they willingly follow his teaching and instructions for the sake of obtaining God’s promises.</p>
<p>v. 5</p>	<p>ἀλλοτριῶ δὲ οὐ μὴ ἀκολουθήσουσιν, ἀλλὰ φεύξονται ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι οὐκ οἶδασιν τῶν ἀλλοτριῶν τὴν φωνήν</p> <p>“Indeed, they will never follow a stranger. Instead, they will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.”</p> <p>The shepherd’s sheep will never follow a stranger but will flee from him, because they do not recognize his voice.</p>	<p>Jewish believers are capable of detecting false teaching and reject it and those who teach it.</p> <p>For example, believing Jews who are immersed in Jesus’ teaching will never willingly follow the false teaching of unbelieving Pharisees, because they are capable of detecting their errors and lies while remaining fundamentally attracted to the truth of the Bible.</p>
<p>v. 6</p>	<p>In v. 6 John provides an editorial comment.</p> <p>ταύτην τὴν παροιμίαν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ἐκεῖνοι δὲ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τίνα ἦν ἢ ἔλαλει αὐτοῖς</p> <p>Jesus told this metaphor to them, but those ones did not understand what he was saying to them.</p> <p>Unfortunately, Jesus’ main audience did not grasp what he was telling them.</p>	<p>John the author says that Jesus specifically presented this metaphor to the Pharisees of 9:40-41, but they lacked the ability to understand and appreciate the truth of it.</p>
<p>v. 7</p>	<p>In vs. 7-15 Jesus presents the second metaphor.</p> <p>εἶπεν οὖν πάλιν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ θύρα [ὁ ποιμὴν] τῶν προβάτων</p> <p>Then Jesus spoke again, “Truly, truly I say to you, I am the gate of the sheep.”</p> <p>Now Jesus changes the metaphor slightly and declares that he is the gate of the sheep.²</p>	<p>Jesus is the <u>only</u> rightful avenue or means by which the Jews may enter into the community of believing Jews and become bona fide members of the nation of Israel.</p> <p>For example and specifically, this rightful path is to believe in Jesus as the long-expected Messiah and King of Israel in the light of all that he does during his first and second appearances.</p>

² There is a textual variant where one major manuscript has “shepherd” instead of “door.” But in line with v. 9, the point that Jesus is making concerns that avenue or path by which Jews can become bona fide members of the nation of Israel.

<p>v. 8a</p>	<p>πάντες ὅσοι ἦλθον πρὸ ἐμοῦ κλέπται εἰσὶν καὶ λησταί,</p> <p>“All who come instead of me are thieves and outlaws.”</p> <p>All others who attempt to provide to the sheep the means to enter the sheepfold are thieves and outlaws.</p>	<p>All other Jews, who, as unbelievers, attempt to provide the means for their fellow Jews to obey God properly as bona fide members of the nation of Israel are very, very wrong in their approach to doing so.</p> <p>For example, the Pharisees are completely wrong in how they understand and teach the Old Testament, especially the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants, so that they cannot properly lead the Jews into correct obedience to God in order to obtain God’s promises.</p>
<p>v. 8b</p>	<p>ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἤκουσαν αὐτῶν τὰ πρόβατα</p> <p>“Nevertheless, the sheep do not listen to them.”</p> <p>The sheep do not listen to these others who are thieves and outlaws and are attempting to provide the means by which they participate in the sheepfold.</p>	<p>The Jews who correctly and genuinely understand the biblical purposes of God from the Old Testament and who grasp that Jesus is not only the Messiah but also their only rightful means to be bona fide members of the nation of Israel will refuse to follow any false leaders.</p> <p>For example, Jesus’ disciples who have authentic belief can tell the difference between his message and the hypocrisy and focus on outward rituals of the unbelieving Pharisees and scribes so as to embrace the former and reject the latter.</p>
<p>v. 9a</p>	<p>ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ θύρα</p> <p>“I am the gate.”</p> <p>Jesus again says that he is the gate of the sheepfold.</p>	<p>Jesus states that he is the only proper means to participate in the sheepfold of the nation of Israel.</p> <p>For example, Jesus’ life, death, resurrection, ascension and return are the only basis for being a bona fide member of Israel, the people of God, and for obtaining His promises.</p>
<p>v. 9b</p>	<p>δι’ ἐμοῦ ἐάν τις εἰσέλθῃ σωθήσεται</p> <p>“If someone enters through me, he will be saved.”</p> <p>If someone enters the sheepfold through Jesus as the gate, that person will obtain salvation.</p>	<p>Only a Jew who recognizes Jesus as the proper means to be a bona fide member of the nation of Israel will escape God’s condemnation.</p> <p>For example, genuine belief in Jesus as the unique Messiah is the divinely required condition by which a Jew can obtain God’s promises and escape both the coming Great and Terrible Day of the Lord against the Jews and God’s eternal punishment and destruction.</p>

<p>v. 9c</p>	<p>καὶ εἰσελεύσεται καὶ ἐξελεύσεται καὶ νομὴν εὐρήσει</p> <p>“And he will go in and out and find pasture.”</p> <p>The person who enters the sheepfold through Jesus as the gate will go in and out of the sheepfold and find land on which there will be good grass to sustain his life.</p>	<p>The believing Jew who recognizes Jesus as the proper means to be a member of Israel will ultimately thrive in his existence.</p> <p>For example, Jews become bona fide members of Israel by means of genuine belief in Jesus, who is the basis of membership, and they will obtain eternal life and participation in the coming “great nation” of Israel during the millennial kingdom.</p>
<p>v. 10a</p>	<p>ὁ κλέπτης οὐκ ἔρχεται εἰ μὴ ἵνα κλέψῃ καὶ θύσῃ καὶ ἀπολέσῃ·</p> <p>“The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy.”</p> <p>Anyone who enters the sheepfold to lead the sheep is motivated only to kill and destroy the sheep.</p>	<p>Any other leader of the Jews who does not authentically believe in and follow Jesus is motivated only selfishly to cause the Jews harm from God.</p> <p>For example, unbelieving Pharisees and scribes are sinfully motivated only to rob God of His people and to make them loyal to only them, thus leading the Jews towards God’s condemnation which they themselves will experience, thereby resulting in eternal destruction for all of them.</p>
<p>v. 10b</p>	<p>ἐγὼ ἦλθον ἵνα ζωὴν ἔχωσιν ἰσχυρὰ καὶ περισσὸν ἔχωσιν</p> <p>“I came that they may have life and may have it to the fullest.”</p> <p>Jesus came so that the sheep may experience life as much as it can be experienced.</p>	<p>Jesus’ role as God’s Messiah is to bring about eternal life for believing Jews in the Kingdom of God.</p> <p>For example, Jesus’ death, resurrection, and interceding on behalf of sinful, believing Jews will result in their participating in God’s promise of their being the most powerful nation in history and of eternal life.</p>
<p>v. 11a</p>	<p>ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός.</p> <p>“I am the good shepherd.”</p> <p>Jesus declares that he is not just any ol’ shepherd. He is the <u>good</u> shepherd.</p>	<p>Jesus has a quality about him and his role that makes him the supreme leader of the Jews, indeed one that will bring about everything that they need to acquire God’s promises.</p> <p>For example, someone else might claim to lead the Jews into obtaining God’s blessings, perhaps through the Mosaic Covenant, but Jesus can always top any leader like that.</p>
<p>v. 11b</p>	<p>ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ τίθει ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων</p> <p>“The <u>good</u> shepherd lays down his existence for the sheep.”</p> <p>Jesus defines “good” by his willingness to die.</p>	<p>The central idea of what it means for Jesus to be the best and primary leader of Israel is that he uniquely qualifies to be such by giving up his life.</p> <p>For example and most importantly for the Jews, Jesus willingly handed over his mortal existence to his enemies, the Jewish leaders, so that they could attempt to get rid of him by crucifying him on the cross.</p>

<p>v. 12a</p>	<p>ὁ μισθωτὸς καὶ οὐκ ὢν ποιμὴν, οὐδὲ οὐκ ἔστιν τὰ πρόβατα ἴδια, θεωρεῖ τὸν λύκον ἐρχόμενον καὶ ἀφίησιν τὰ πρόβατα καὶ φεύγει —</p> <p>“The hired hand, who is also not the shepherd, to whom the sheep do not belong, sees the wolf coming, and he leaves the sheep and flees.”</p> <p>Any other Jewish leader would naturally choose self-preservation in the midst of leading the Jews.</p>	<p>Anyone else in Jesus’ position of attempting to lead the Jews towards God’s promises and then encounters some sort of opposition would do all he could to stay alive.</p> <p>For example, the Jewish leaders do not appreciate God’s purposes for the Messiah to die for the sinful Jews of Israel in order to save them, but instead they are all about preserving their lives and existences as examples of God’s blessings, even in the presence of the Roman occupation.</p>
<p>vs. 12b-13</p>	<p>καὶ ὁ λύκος ἀρπάζει αὐτὰ καὶ σκορπίζει ὅτι μισθωτὸς ἐστὶν καὶ οὐ μέλει αὐτῷ περὶ τῶν προβάτων</p> <p>“And the wolf snatches them and scatters them, because he is the hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep.”</p> <p>Without Jesus, his sheep lack the necessary means to remain properly together so that all other means fail.</p>	<p>The absence of comprehensive belief in Jesus as the primary leader of the Jewish nation allows for too many sinful influences in the nation of Israel and prevents them from attaining the cohesiveness that will come from God’s promises.</p> <p>For example, the Jewish leaders’ obsession with outward performance of the Mosaic Covenant leaves their people in an inappropriate spiritual condition, so that they are just as far as ever from being the “great nation” of God’s promise.</p>
<p>v. 14a</p>	<p>ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς</p> <p>“I am the good shepherd.”</p> <p>Jesus again declares that he is the <u>good</u> sheep.</p>	<p>Again, Jesus has a quality about him and his role that makes him the supreme leader of the Jews, indeed one that will bring about everything that they need to acquire God’s promises.</p>
<p>v. 14b</p>	<p>καὶ γινώσκω τὰ ἐμὰ καὶ ἡ ἐμὰ γινώσκουσίν με τὰ ἐμὰ</p> <p>“And I know my own and my own know me.”</p> <p>Jesus recognizes who his own sheep are, and they recognize him likewise.</p>	<p>Jesus can easily recognize which Jews actually belong to him, and they in turn have sense that truly belong to him.</p> <p>For example, if a Jew is earnestly interested in understanding and following his instructions, then Jesus can see that this Jew has embraced him as the Messiah, while this same Jew sense the same kind of bond with him.</p>
<p>v. 15a</p>	<p>καθὼς γινώσκει με ὁ πατήρ καὶ γὰρ γινώσκω τὸν πατέρα,</p> <p>“just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father.”</p> <p>Jesus likens the mutual recognition that he has with his sheep to that between God and him.</p>	<p>The mutual recognition, knowledge, and appreciation of Jesus and believing Jews are like the mutual knowledge, recognition, and appreciation that God the Father and Jesus have.</p> <p>For example, Jesus believes and follows God and His eternal purposes for him, so that his own followers believe and follow his instructions for them.</p>

<p>v. 15b</p>	<p>καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἵθιμι ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων</p> <p>“And I lay down my existence for the sheep.”</p> <p>Jesus again declares that he is willing to die for the sheep.</p>	<p>Again, the central idea of what it means for Jesus to be the best and primary leader of Israel is that he uniquely qualifies to be such by giving up his life.</p> <p>For example and most importantly for the Jews, Jesus willingly handed over his mortal existence to his enemies, the Jewish leaders, so that they could attempt to get rid of him by crucifying him on the cross, which provided exactly what God wanted—an executed intercessor for sinners.</p>
<p>v. 16a</p>	<p>In vs. 16-18 Jesus adds more information to the initial metaphor and explanation.</p> <hr/> <p>καὶ ἄλλα ἢ πρόβατα ἔχω ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τῆς ἀλλῆς ταύτης</p> <p>“And I have other sheep who are not from this sheepfold.”</p> <p>Jesus declares that his sheep extend beyond the immediate sheepfold.</p>	<p>Besides believing Jews whom Jesus will lead, there will also be believing Gentiles who will benefit from Jesus’ role as the Messiah.</p> <p>For example, in John 12:20-22, in Acts 2 during Peter’s sermon, in Acts 10 as a result of the Peter’s interaction with Cornelius and his family and friends, and in the rest of Acts because of Paul’s travels and efforts, many Gentiles believe in Jesus in order to gain eternal mercy and life from God.</p>
<p>v. 16b</p>	<p>κάκεινα δεῖ με ἵγαγεῖν</p> <p>“And it is necessary for me to lead those ones.”</p> <p>Jesus says that he must lead these other sheep, too.</p>	<p>Just as Jesus will be the unique, primary, rightful, and eternal leader of believing Jews, he will be also for believing Gentiles.</p> <p>For example, Peter and Paul make it very clear in their interactions with Gentiles that Jesus is just as much their eternal savior as he is for Jews.</p>
<p>v. 16c</p>	<p>καὶ τῆς φωνῆς μου ἁκούσουσιν,</p> <p>“And they will listen to my voice,”</p> <p>These other sheep will truly hearken to Jesus’ voice.</p>	<p>The believing Gentiles will recognize Jesus as the Jewish Messiah and will understand the eternal significance of his instructions so that they will follow him only as earnestly as believing Jews.</p> <p>For example, people such as Luke and other Gentiles (Epaphras, Epaphroditus, et. al) will believe in Jesus for their own eternal salvations.</p>

<p>v. 16d</p>	<p>καὶ γενήσονται μία ποίμνη, εἰς ποιμὴν</p> <p>“and they will become one flock—one shepherd.”</p> <p>And both kinds of sheep will become one flock and have him, Jesus, as one shepherd.</p>	<p>The believing Gentiles will join the believing Jews as members of Israel whom Jesus will lead as their king and Messiah.</p> <p>For example, both Jewish and Gentile believers will participate in both promises to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 with the nation of Israel becoming the most powerful nation in history when Jesus returns and with all believers acquiring life on the eternal earth.</p>
<p>v. 17</p>	<p>διὰ τοῦτό με ὁ πατήρ ἀγαπᾷ ὅτι ἐγὼ τίθημι τὴν ψυχὴν μου, ἵνα πάλιν λάβω αὐτήν</p> <p>“Because of this the Father loves me, because I lay down my existence, in order that I may receive it again.”</p> <p>God truly loves Jesus for being willing to die, which Jesus does so that he may live again.</p>	<p>God the Father has set His love on Jesus because he freely and willingly chooses to die in order that God may grant him resurrection from the dead and his eternal role as king and priest.</p> <p>For example, Jesus’ willingness to go through the entire ordeal of his arrest, trial, and crucifixion makes him loved by God the Father, and the result will be that He will raise Jesus from the dead in order that he may complete his role as King and High Priest of Israel and all Gentile believers.</p>
<p>v. 18a</p>	<p>οὐδεὶς αἶρει αὐτήν ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ, ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ τίθημι αὐτήν ἀπ’ ἐμαυτοῦ</p> <p>“No one takes it from me. But I lay it down from myself.”</p> <p>Jesus says that no one forces him to die, but he willingly gives up his life.</p>	<p>From a human perspective, in any number of ways Jesus could avoid being put to death. However, he willfully and intentionally dies.</p> <p>For example, Jesus could have avoided arrest simply by staying out of Jerusalem, but he attended the Passover, knowing exactly what lay ahead for him—arrest, trial, and execution by crucifixion. Plus, he has the authority and power to stop his enemies at any time.</p>
<p>v. 18b</p>	<p>ἐξουσίαν ἔχω θεῖναι αὐτήν, καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχω πάλιν λαβεῖν αὐτήν</p> <p>“I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to receive it again.”</p> <p>Jesus says that it is his prerogative to hand over his life, and likewise it is his prerogative to receive it again.</p>	<p>Jesus is free from all other elements of the creation to give up his existence by allowing it to happen to him, and he is free from all other elements of the creation to obtain his resurrection from the dead.</p> <p>For example, there is nothing within the creation that will hinder Jesus from willingly offering his life and dying by crucifixion, and the same is true of God the Father’s resurrecting him from the dead.</p>

<p>v. 18c</p>	<p>ταύτην τὴν ἐντολὴν ἔλαβον παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου</p> <p>“I received this instruction from my Father.”</p> <p>Jesus says that he received this instruction from his Father.</p>	<p>Jesus clearly declares that the plans and instructions for how his life will progress right up to his death and resurrection came from the transcendent creator, God the Father.</p> <p>For example, to be crucified and then raised from the dead as a vital aspect of Jesus’ role as the Messiah is something that he was specifically given according to the eternal plans and purposes by God the Father, who is the transcendent creator of all reality and the source of Jesus’ existence on earth.</p>
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